

Message Text

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21

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8222

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

USNATO 1435

AMCONSUL ZAGREB

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 6373

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, YO, BU

SUBJECT: YUGOSLAV/BULGARIAN CONSULTATIONS

REF: SOFIA 1981

1. YUGOSLAV DELEGATION TO YUGOSLAV-BULGARIAN MIXED
WORKING GROUP REPORTEDLY RETURNED TO BELGRADE SEPTEMBER 27
AFTER ALMOST WEEK-LONG DISCUSSIONS IN BULGARIA. PROMINENT
PRESS COVERAGE IS GIVEN TO ZHIVKOV HAVING RECEIVED
YUGOSLAVS ON THEIR LAST DAY IN SOFIA "IN A COMRADELY
AND FRIENDLY ATMOSPHERE." REGARDING OUTCOME OF DISCUSSIONS
IN GENERAL, PRESS ACCOUNTS REFER TO DELEGATIONS HAVING
HELD "DETAILED AND USEFUL EXCHANGE OF THOUGHTS ON THE STATE
OF MUTUAL RELATIONS INCLUDING ON QUESTIONS IN DISPUTE,
AND CONSIDERED WAYS AND POSSIBILITIES FOR THE FURTHER
DEVELOPMENT OF YUGOSLAV-BULGARIAN COOPERATION." PRESS
ACCOUNTS ARE OTHERWISE DEVOID OF SUBSTANCE.

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2. MACEDONIAN MINORITY ISSUE WAS ADDRESSED PUBLICLY ONLY IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION PUT TO YUGOSLAV SPOKESMAN KALEZIC DURING REGULAR PRESS BRIEFING AT FSFA (SEPTEMBER 23). KALEZIC ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ONE PROBLEM BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IS "CERTAINLY" THE MACEDONIAN MINORITIES ISSUE, BUT WENT NO FURTHER.

3. SOVIET VIEW OFFERED DURING COURSE OF DISCUSSIONS IS INTERESTING, IF NOT ENTIRELY CONVINCING. FIRST SECRETARY TOLD EMBOFF THAT SOVIETS HAVE ASSIDUOUSLY REFRAINED FROM GETTING INVOLVED IN THIS DISPUTE EVEN TO EXTENT OF REFUSING GOOD OFFICES DESPITE REQUESTS BY BOTH PARTIES, AND DENIED THAT SOVIETS APPLIED ANY PRESSURE TO GET TWO SIDES TOGETHER. NIKIFOROV SAID SOVIETS ALSO DO NOT SEE MUCH HOPE FOR A FINAL SETTLEMENT BUT BELIEVE BOTH ARE INTERESTED IN QUIETING DOWN PROBLEM AND MOVING ON TO DIFFERENT LEVEL OF RELATIONS. HE NOTED WITH AMUSEMENT RECENT VISIT TO SOFIA OF AUSTRIAN PRESIDENT KIRCHSCHLAEGER AND WAS CERTAIN THAT YUGOSLAVS ALSO HAD TAKEN NOTE OF THIS EXCHANGE BY THE TWO NATIONS WITH WHICH THEY HAVE ACTIVE MINORITIES DISPUTES.

4. SOFIA MEETING APPARENTLY RESULT OF LONG SERIES OF EXCHANGES BETWEEN YUGOSLAVS AND BULGARIANS DATING FROM TITO/ZHIVKOV AGREEMENT IN HELSINKI (1975) TO SOMEHOW DEAL WITH THE MACEDONIAN MINORITY ISSUE AND REMOVE IT AS BONE OF CONTENTION. TITO HAS REPORTEDLY REFUSED TO SEE ZHIVKOV AGAIN UNTIL SOME PROGRESS MADE.

5. WHILE YUGOSLAVS MIGHT AGREE HENCEFORTH TO SOFTEN THEIR PUBLIC TREATMENT OF THE ISSUE (WITH CERTAIN BULGARIAN CONCESSIONS), OR BOTH SIDES MIGHT UNDERTAKE MEASURES TO FACILITATE MACEDONIAN (TRANS-BORDER) CONTACTS WE ARE NOT OVERLY SANGUINE ON EITHER. ANY SUBSTANTIVE AGREEMENT ON MACEDONIANS IN BULGARIA ISSUE WOULD HAVE TO RESULT FROM FUNDAMENTAL CHANGE IN POSITION OF AT LEAST ONE SIDE, WHICH FROM YUGOSLAV VIEWPOINT WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE AT PRESENT AND WHICH YUGOSLAVS CLAIM THEY DO NOT EXPECT FROM BULGARIANS. WE ARE NOT EVEN CERTAIN THAT SOFTENING OF THE RHETORIC WILL RESULT SINCE YUGOSLAV
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DELEGATION IS CO-CHAIRLED BY DEPUT FOREIGN SECRETARY MOJSOV, A MACEDONIAN AND A KNOWN HARDLINER ON THIS ISSUE. SOVIET EMBOFF SAID HE TOO WAS SURPRISED AT INCLUSION OF MAJSOV, BUT WOULD NOT SPECULATE ON ITS SIGNIFICANCE. (OTHER CO-CHAIRMAN WAS MEMBER OF LCY EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE DOBRIVOJE VIDIC.)

6. IN THIS CONNECTION WE ARE REMINDED THAT YUGOSLAV

PRESS ENJOYS TAKING POTSHOTS AT BULGARIAN DEVELOPMENTS AND COMMENTARIES, AND WONDER WHETHER ANY AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TWO WILL STIFLE THIS TENDENCY. SEPTEMBER 24, FOR EXAMPLE, TANJUG, REPORTING FROM SOFIA ON 32ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF THE BULGARIAN PEOPLES ARMY, SAID THAT BULGARIAN WRITERS COMMENTING ON THE VEENT TENDED TO EMPHASIZE "PARTICIPATION OF THE BPA IN THE LIBERATION OF YUGOSLAVIA" WHILE "TOTALLY SIDESTEPPING EVERYTHING THAT YUGOSLAVIA'S PEOPLES LIBERATION MOVEMENT DID EVEN BEFORE (SEPTEMBER, 1944) IN AN ATTEMPT TO DEVELOP THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN BULGARIA." AND TANJUG PIECE FROM SOFIA IN POLITIKA SEPTEMBER 23 TOOK OBVIOUS DELIGHT IN CLAIMING SOVIET HISTORIAN ATTACKED BY BULGARIANS FOR NOT SUPPORTING BULGARIAN VIEW OF INJUSTICES OF TREATIES OF BERLIN (1878), BUCHAREST (1913) AND NEUILLY (1919).

7. ANOTHER FEVELOPMENT WHICH MAY BOTHER THE BULGARIANS IS RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT THAT TV BELGRADE WILL BEGIN A BULGARIAN LANGUAGE PROGRAM "FOR MEMBERS OF THE BULGARIAN NATIONALITY IN YUGOSLAVIA" IN EARLY 1977. CONSIDERING SMALL NUMBER OF BULGARIANS IN YUGOSLAVIA, EFFORT MAY ALSO BE AIMED ACROSS BORDER, ALTHOUGH WE ARE NOT CERTAIN JUST WHAT YUGOSLAVS HOPE TO ACHIEVE BEYOND OBVIOUS STRENGTHENING OF CLAIM THAT THERE ARE TWO NATIONALITIES PLUS TWO LANGUAGES.
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